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" Read not to contradict or confute, nor to believe and  
" take for granted, nor to find matter for discourse; but  
" to weigh and consider." BACON.

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THE  
LAWFULNESS  
OF  
DEFENSIVE WAR  
UPON  
CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES  
IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

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By a CLERGYMAN of the CHURCH of ENGLAND.

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" I am pained at my very heart—I cannot hold my  
" peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of  
" the trumpet, the alarm of war." Jer. iv. 19.

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“ *Bishop.* Will you be ready with all faithful  
“ diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous  
“ and strange *doctrines*, contrary to God's word, &c.?

“ *Answer.* I will, &c.

“ *Bishop.* Will you maintain and set forwards, as  
“ much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love  
“ among Christian people, &c.?

“ *Answer.* I will do so, the Lord being my helper.”

(See—*The Form of consecrating Bishops, &c.*  
according to the Order of the Church of  
England.)



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THE  
LAWFULNESS  
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TO deprive a fellow-creature of existence, in any case or upon any pretence whatever, is a very awful thing. Those arguments, which answer to the feelings of every humane heart on this important subject, are certainly deserving of a few moments consideration. As nature, humanity, and religion are the advocates for mercy, so interest, pride, and avarice are their opposers; and to which of these it is most safe to listen, and on which side we may most securely depend for decision, in cases, where the dearest privileges of our fellow-mortals are at stake, we need but little reflection to determine.

Such is now the general opinion concerning offensive war, that very few, if any, will attempt to justify it—and yet there are many, who argue

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with such a degree of speciousness and plausibility in behalf of defensive war, that even good men are led into a persuasion, that it is justifiable for Christians to engage in it, for the safety and defence of their country, families, liberty, civil rights, &c. and to save themselves from being destroyed by their enemies.

Though war in general may appear to be inconsistent with the doctrines of the Gospel; yet it may be said that it was permitted and even commanded to the Jews under the Mosaic dispensation. And, in the early ages of the church, many Christians served in a military capacity under Constantine, and other emperors professing Christianity. And, although there will come a time of universal peace upon earth, that time is not yet come: it concerns us therefore, in the mean while, to choose the less of two evils, where one of them must be endured; and, it is better to engage in war, though it be attended with many bad consequences, than by declining it, subject ourselves and others to yet greater calamities.

This, I apprehend, is the sum of all that can be said by the professors of Christianity in behalf of defensive war; and plausible as it may seem at first sight, yet upon a little inquiry, it will be found



found to rest but on a weak and tottering foundation.

Let it not be thought, that the arguments now offered upon this subject are considered as by any means necessary to support that doctrine of *universal forbearance*\*, which ought to be the duty, and certainly is the interest and happiness of every Christian to recommend to the world, both

\* That the precepts of Christ and his apostles are directly in favour of this doctrine, I presume, no one can deny, and yet we are told by very high authority, that many of those precepts are "*but strong Oriental idioms,*" and therefore, *not to be taken literally*. But how can we better judge of the precise meaning of the precepts of any teachers, than by comparing them with their own practice, and making their actions a comment (and what surer comment can we have) upon their doctrine? The word and works of Christ appear in perfect unison—as two undeniable witnesses they join in bearing the most conclusive evidence against all fury, contention, and strife. What arguments then of human wisdom can possess force sufficient to disannul such an authority?

" We are not at liberty to blend human inventions with  
 " pure revelation from God. Our holy faith, when pressed  
 " into such an union, is injured by it, since it becomes  
 " difficult to distinguish between the pure principle, and its  
 " debasement by intermixture."

BP. of BRISTOL's *Sermon on the  
 general Fast, March 7, 1798.*

by precept and example:—that doctrine rests upon an immovable basis. The following pages are designed as an humble endeavour to obviate the prejudices of those, who sincerely desire to arrive at the knowledge of the truth; but have stumbling-blocks thrown in their way, by the advocates of those ideal virtues, which have long dazzled and deluded mankind by their false glare and tinsel splendor: and which are the more dangerous, as being often suggested by the emissaries of darkness, veiled under the appearance of angels of light.

It having been recorded in the Old Testament, that war was permitted, and on some occasions even commanded to the Jews; some have been led to argue from this circumstance, that war is therefore lawful to Christians also. But not to mention, that many things were allowed to the Israelites on account of the hardness of their heart; and that we do not live under the Mosaic dispensation; it seems remarkable, and truly deserving of attention, that since the promulgation of the Gospel, the Jews have been driven from their own country, and not having any civil authority on the face of the whole earth, this their right (or rather, allowance) of war is, and is likely to remain, for ever suspended, for  
 “Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the  
 “Gentiles,

" Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24.

The Jews practised wars, and some other things of a similar nature, under a law from heaven ; but, by its being now taken away, Divine Providence seems to signify, that the power once granted to that peculiar people (for reasons known only to Infinite Wisdom) is now resumed by that Being, who has the sole right of delegating such authority to mortals : and, that every one who assumes it without being in like manner authorised, can be regarded in no other light than as a transgressor of the divine law, and an encroacher on the prerogative of the Creator.

Should it be asserted and acknowledged, that Christians were engaged in a military capacity during the early ages of the church ; yet would it by no means justify Christians of the present day in following their example, if we do not find the practice to have been dictated and warranted by the precepts and example of Christ. The mistakes of those, who in *one* age professed themselves his disciples, will not excuse the misconduct of those who assume the same character in *another*. The question is not, what Christians have done ? — but, what they ought to have done ? and,

and, what Christ has commanded both them and us to do? Otherwise, the temporising of Peter with the Jewish converts might be alleged in favour of many unjustifiable liberties taken by the present teachers and professors of Christianity, or the dispute between Barnabas and Saul be considered as a sufficient warrant for all the unkindness and cruelty which has been since exercised in the fierce contentions of Christian professors with each other.

When Peter, under the influence of his naturally warm temper, and hasty mistaken zeal for his master's service, had recourse to the sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, who had been sent among others to apprehend Jesus; the benevolent Redeemer of mankind miraculously healed the wound given by the rash hand of his disciple, and rebuked him with this memorable sentence, "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This rebuke was evidently not confined to Peter, who (it is remarkable) as he was so ready to use violence in defence of our Saviour, was also the first to deny him; but prophetically extends to all of every age, who, under the name of Christians, should in this respect follow Peter's example, as the history of the Christian church, and the many surprising changes



changes that are taking place in the world at the present moment, may serve to convince us.

Under the sanction of Peter's venerable name, the church of Rome, who boast of him as their head, have often shewn the same intemperate zeal by which he more than once inadvertently sullied his character ; and have used the weapons of carnal warfare—the implements of destruction, as instruments for propagating the doctrines of him, who declared, that he came *not to destroy men's lives, but to save them*. Through such means the Roman pontiffs were once raised to more than regal authority ; and the crozier of the pretended successor of the poor fisherman of Bethsaida bore a greater sway than all the sceptres on the earth ; but it is observable, that by the same means they declined more rapidly than they arose.

*Antichrist*, to whom it was given to make war, is the direct opposer of *the Prince of Peace, the Saviour* of men ; and therefore is very emphatically styled the *destroyer* :—and all who maintain this truly antichristian doctrine of the lawfulness of war, do thereby prove, that however they may differ in other respects from the Romish church, or refine upon each other, their descent is from one common parent ; and that, whatever  
else

else they may be, they certainly are not the real subjects of the Prince of Peace.

*The love of our country\** is a plea frequently urged in favour of the lawfulness of war, and

\* “ Christianity in its regards, steps beyond the narrow  
“ bounds of national advantage, in quest of universal  
“ good ; it does not encourage particular patriotism in op-  
“ position to general benignity ; or prompt to love our  
“ country at the expence of our integrity ; or allow us to  
“ indulge our passions to the detriment of thousands. It  
“ looks upon all the human race as children of the same  
“ father, and wishes them equal blessings : in ordering us  
“ to do good, to love as brethren, to forgive injuries, and  
“ to study peace ; it quite annihilates the disposition for  
“ martial glory, and utterly debases the pomp of war.”

*Sermon on Isa. ii. 4. by Bp. WATSON.*

“ With respect to politics, in the usual sense of that  
“ word, or discussion concerning different forms of govern-  
“ ment, Christianity declines every question upon the  
“ subject. Whilst politicians are disputing about mo-  
“ narchies, aristocracies, and republics, Christianity is alike  
“ applicable, useful, and friendly to them all ; inasmuch  
“ as it tends to make men virtuous ; and it is easier to govern  
“ good men than bad men under any constitution : as it  
“ states obedience to government in ordinary cases, to be  
“ not merely a submission to force, but a duty of con-  
“ science : as it induces dispositions favourable to public  
“ tranquillity, a Christian’s chief care being to pass quietly  
“ through this world to a better.”

PALEY.—*Evidences of Christianity.*

as an excuse for engaging in hostilities. But what is the love of our country, if opposed to the law of Christ, but a blind and selfish attachment to that particle of earth on which we drew our first breath, or on which we happen to live. The benevolence of a Christian mind, derived as it is from a higher source, is not confined within such narrow bounds. It considers the world itself but as a temporary stage, and all its inhabitants as brethren—as fellow-travellers towards a better country. In every human being the Christian beholds a child of those common parents, from whom he also derives his existence, a creature of the same almighty power with himself, and of that form, in which the DIVINE WORD united itself to human nature, and went about doing good. Nor does this affection, which is universal and unlimited, hinder the Christian from joining in the exclamation of the patriot, “I love my country.” I cannot, he may say, but feel an affection to my native land; but the love of which the whole world is the object, leads me to think, that the happiness of the whole is not increased by the misery of a part. I am rather rejoiced to perceive that in knowing and practising the things which belong to my own peace, I am contributing in the best manner I am able, to the true interest and real welfare of all. The increase of the riches of  
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what is but a part, delights not me so much as the improvement of its morals. I had rather behold my countrymen honest, industrious, and benevolent, though poor and lowly, than see them corrupted and enslaved by wealth, luxury, and splendor. Better, far better would it be for me, as an individual, to resign whatever I possess, than that one human being should be destroyed in my defence. All worldly enjoyments are trifles, in my estimation, when put in the scale against a fellow-creature's life. Humanity forbids me to desire that any one might be seduced by alluring promises and specious pretences, into the commission of enormities, at the bare mention of which my soul shudders with horror, that I may remain easy and secure in my possessions ! And how would my heart bleed, and my mind be agonized at the thought of my poorer neighbour's being dragged from his much-loved home on *my* account ; unwillingly forced from the few comforts he is blessed with—from the most pleasing prospects and engagements of life—the embraces of his dear wife and children, dearer, perhaps, to him than all that this world could bestow without them—to leave the innocent and delightful task of labouring for their support, and be forced into the field of slaughter ; that I may be splendidly attended, clothed in purple and fine-linen, and fare



bully—though he who died for the salvation of us both, and whose disciple I profess myself to be, had not where to rest his head; and when he laid down his life, was obliged to the charity of a Jew, for a sepulchre to shelter him from the insult of his enemies.

The love of our country is too often made a specious pretence for indulging our ambition; it serves as a mask to cover the pride and discontent of one, the tyranny and haughtiness of another, and the interested selfishness of all. It is, in fact, but a popular name for an immoderate self-love, disguised under the fair, but false character of an ardent desire for the general welfare of our fellow-countrymen.

How many flaming patriots have there been, who were ready to bawl and fight for their country, while they remained in possession of its emoluments and honours: but, no sooner have they been stript of the borrowed plumes, than their poor forsaken country has had to seek other champions; and, perhaps, even for her defence against their discontent, fullness, and revenge. Again, how many of the champions of liberty have been loud in their vociferations against corruption, &c. and ambitious of reducing all to the same level with themselves—till a glittering

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bribe has been hung within their reach, they were led to the banquet which power and wealth provide for their deluded votaries ; scarce have their lips touched the Circéan cup, before they have sunk down inebriated by the fatal draught, and yielded themselves unresisting victims to that slavery, which they once pretended to despise.

Are we then, as I have heard it expressed, to give up our liberty, civil rights, &c.—quietly to sit still and suffer them to be torn from us, without even attempting to defend them, or making any retaliation for the injuries we sustain ? that is, in other words, are we patiently to endure the spoiling and loss of our goods ; or, are we to rush into murder, and in determined opposition to the will of the Supreme Being, to hazard our eternal welfare in defence of the transitory conveniences and accommodations of this life ? This question, under either form, has its full answer in the words of one wiser than the sons of men, “ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ”

Our liberty, civil rights, &c. are certainly blessings, while they can be enjoyed with innocence,

cence, or be obtained without being purchased by a crime ; but they are blessings to us only as we make a right use of them. At best, they relate to this life alone, and like the fashion of the world to which they belong, they are rapidly passing away. A few fleeting years will inevitably close our eyes to all terrestrial objects, and place us beyond the reach of the highest wordly privilege or advantage ; and then, what will be their value to us ? Again, we are apt to entertain false ideas of these much desired enjoyments, for want of inquiring into their intrinsic value, and considering how few of them contribute to the real comfort of life, and how little the solid satisfaction of the mind depends upon external circumstances ; for want of an impartial examination of the ground on which we build our opinion of earthly things. We forget, that the happiness of man consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions ; that with gold he often heaps up trouble ; and that he can carry nothing away with him when he dieth, but the register of an approving or guilty conscience.

For a nation to send its thousands into the field of battle, or into a foreign land to meet those enemies, who otherwise might become the invaders, is committing a real and certain evil, in

order to avoid that which is only supposed and uncertain.

The dread of being destroyed by our enemies, if we do not go to war with them, is the effect of a guilty conscience, and can never be considered by Christians as any thing but mere folly and delusion ; for however speciously it may be glossed over, it is a plain and unequivocal proof of our disbelief in the superintendence of Divine Providence, and that we had rather depend for protection upon man, the child of dust and creature of a day, than on that Supreme Almighty Governor, in whose hands are the issues of life and death.

*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Does Omnipotence need the feeble aid of human power (*the chariots of Israel and the horsemen*) to compel men to obey the dictates of Infinite Wisdom ? If war is to be by war destroyed, and mortal pride to be subdued by mortal force, why bled Jesus on the cross ? Why were those of whom the world was not worthy, whipped to death, stoned, exiled, &c. ? Heb. xi. Why was Christianity established through the sufferings, forbearance, and humility of its professors ? Why are there left upon record precepts that discountenance every propensity to revenge or retaliation ?



liation? And why did the lives and actions of the Author of our faith, and his apostles, hold up so glorious and bright an example, to encourage us to enter upon the paths of peace, if Christians of the present day be at liberty to neglect and disregard it, snatching vengeance from the hand of Him *to whom alone vengeance belongeth?*

That there will come a time, when universal peace shall reign upon earth, seems to have become almost a general belief; but, it is alleged that the time is not yet—that this is not the age in which it is to take place. This, indeed, may not be the time, when all men will submit to be guided in their actions by the harmonizing principles of the Gospel, and to live together in undissembled amity and love; yet this is the time, when true Christian charity ought to possess and govern the hearts and lives of all, whose minds are enlightened by the Sun of Righteousness; who profess themselves subjects to the kingdom of Christ, and see the necessity of an unreserved obedience to the dictates of his spirit—to these surely the time *is* come.

If men become not Christians individually, and bear not their testimony to the design and end of the Gospel, in opposition to every thing

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If men become not Christians individually, and bear not their testimony to the design and end of the Gospel, in opposition to every thing

that militates against it; how is the reign of righteousness and peace to be promoted, and how is it ever to become general? If we do not become peace-makers now, when are we to make good our title to that character; and what will the continual expression of, let *thy kingdom come*, and *thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven* avail us? Our good-will to men can no otherwise be rightly manifested than by our obedience to him who died for their salvation; and, upon no other foundation can we safely rest our hopes of sharing in the reward of the faithful and wise servant who did his master's will.

War being the scourge, as well as effect of moral depravity, it may not be consistent with the purposes of Divine Wisdom, that an end should at this time be put to it every where; yet, as Providence has kindly permitted us the opportunity of withdrawing our aid and assent from its enormities, of refraining from blood-guiltiness, and possibly of rescuing some few of our fellow-creatures from the remorse, &c. attendant upon such practices; this may, perhaps, be part of the work assigned us as individuals; and for the neglect of which, those who are convinced of its importance may have to answer.

Why are we to withhold our obedience to  
Christ



Christ in this respect, until all men are agreed; more than in any other? We might with an equal degree of propriety, plead the same excuse for withholding our obedience from all the other precepts of the Gospel; and pretend thus to justify ourselves for theft, adultery, drunkenness, and every other evil. All the laws of Christ are certainly of indispensable obligation, and the observance of every one of them is therefore essential to the well-being, as well as the character of a Christian.

There are many, who from a natural tenderness of heart, can feel very sensibly for those who among their nearer connections meet with disasters, disappointments, and affliction; and are ready to do all in their power to alleviate them, when they fall within the compass of their immediate observation; yet can read or talk of the miseries and desolation of war (though unavoidably fatal to the morals, comfort, and happiness, as well as to the lives of thousands) without a sigh, or giving themselves hardly a moment's concern; nay, can even plead at times in excuse for war, that it is a necessary evil? But, whence this strange contradiction, this glaring inconsistency in the conduct of reasonable beings, but from the selfishness of our corrupt nature, which prevents us from being  
affected

affected with those distresses from which we are exempted by our situations in life ? We are apt to regard mankind only as they stand connected with ourselves, are of our own language, and agreeable to us in their manners, or serviceable in the promotion of our worldly interest and enjoyments ; forgetting that every child of sorrow is our brother, and capable of the same sensations with ourselves. But it is not enough that we heave an involuntary sigh, or drop an occasional tear, at the recital of human misery ; our hearts must be enlarged and our hands extended for the consolation and relief of all who stand in need of our assistance : what little power, interest, or ability we may be blessed with (however small) ought to be exerted in promoting every thing that may tend, even in the remotest degree, to mitigate and lessen the sufferings of mankind. And what can tend so much to this great and benevolent purpose, as the removal of those obstacles\* which hinder the spirit

\* " While human learning is making a rapid progress in its various branches, the religion of Christ is almost every where overwhelmed by human formularies and systems. Christianity can never have its free course among men of improved understandings, and even among rational creatures in general, while gross misrepresentations of it are substituted in the place of the simple and perfect original." BP. NEWCOMBE.

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spirit of Christianity from shedding its benign and healing influence over the face of the whole earth? We should endeavour to open the eyes of our fellow-creatures to their true interest, and convince them that our individual happiness is best promoted by our united exertions for the comfort and welfare of the whole human race; for we are members one of another, and if one member suffer, all the members should feel and suffer with it.

But mankind can never come into a state of concord with each other, or continue in it for any length of time, so long as they are governed by their lusts, ambition, avarice, and revenge; they must be freed from the tyranny of these, to fit them for that much desired age of universal peace, which the Scriptures teach us to look for: and, as he who experiences this work to be

“ If Christianity were stripped of all disguises, and shewn  
 “ in her native simplicity and beauty, just as she descended  
 “ from heaven; all objections to her divine origin would  
 “ immediately vanish.”

FARMER *on the Temptation in the Wilderness.*

“ The taking away false foundations is not to the prejudice,  
 “ dice, but advantage of truth, which is never injured or  
 “ endangered so much, as when mixed with, or built on,  
 “ falsehood.”

LOCKE *on Human Understanding.*

effected

effected in his own heart, contributes to its advancement, so, on the contrary, he who withholds the assistance he is capable of affording, in whatever way it may be, is so far injurious to himself, his country, and all mankind, by harbouring in his bosom those secret but destructive enemies to human happiness, which are so ready, on every slight occasion, to break forth and involve all within their reach in strife, confusion, and every evil work.

What can possibly be more different than the professors of Christianity in the several ages of the world from each other? In *one age* they are recorded to have been meek and lowly followers of their suffering Lord, yielding their backs to the scourge, their cheeks to those who plucked off the hair, and their breasts to the sword of the executioner, without murmuring or resistance—and even praying for their murderers: in *another*, we are struck with astonishment to see men, under the very same profession, in all the tinsel pomp of military parade, leading forth their respective legions against each other, and contending even unto death for some trifling object,—and attempting to justify their conduct under the specious plea of necessity; but what will such a plea avail, in that awful day when inquisition is made for blood? *Instruments of*  
cruelty



*cruelty are in their habitations—O my soul, come not thou into their secrets—unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!*

Who can avoid being shocked at beholding the cross, once the emblem of peace and reconciliation to the sons of men, now used to excite in their bosoms those diabolical tempers, from which the Lamb of God laid down his life to save us. And to heighten the dreadful scene (Oh! more than folly and madness!) the preachers of Christianity pitching their tents under the banners of the destroying angel, and stimulating those who blindly rely on them for saving instruction, to deeds, at the bare mention of which the heart of humanity recoils, and which fill their unhappy country with widows and orphans. Who can think of these things, without lamenting the infatuation, ignorance, and delusion of the present race of Christians, and dreading the awful effects of such an apostacy from a religion that never did, nor ever will, breathe any thing but **PEACE ON EARTH** and **GOOD-WILL TO MEN..**

And shall we see our fellow-creatures sinking by thousands into a gulph of error and destruction, and not extend an arm to save those who are yet  
within

within our reach, or even to beckon them to the shore? Let not those, to whom truth has been revealed, conceal it within their own breasts, and "fullen, like lamps in sepulchres," suffer "their shine to enlighten but themselves."

It has been observed, and with some degree of truth, that it is difficult to draw the line between offensive and defensive war, and between defensive war and that coercion which it is necessary that the civil magistrate should exercise to restrain the unruly from invading the rights and disturbing the peace of their fellow-citizens. It may be so to those who suffer themselves to be governed by erroneous principles. If we allow that the civil magistrate has a right on some occasions to dispose of the lives of his subjects, it will then be difficult. But, if we set aside that usurped power over human life which no mortal can justly assume, the difficulty vanishes in a moment. Here are fixed the limits of man's authority, *Thou shalt not kill.*

The right of punishing even murder by death is questionable, and has been considered by some wise and good men as unjustifiable, and inconsistent with the dictates of justice, policy, humanity,

humanity, and religion\*. In what light then must the same mode of punishment be regarded when inflicted for offences of a less criminal nature? And if man appears not to be endued with any divine authority to take away the life of man, for the commission of the most enormous crimes, what can palliate, or justify, the destroying of thousands uncondemned by any human law? There may be a distinction made in courts of judicature between lawful and un-

\* See Blackstone's Commentaries; Eden on Penal Law; Treatise on Criminal Law; the Marquis of Beccaria on Crimes and Punishments; Dr. Rush, of America, on Punishment of Murder by Death, &c. &c.

Though it may be alleged, that some under the Mosaic dispensation were permitted to inflict capital punishments, yet it may be answered in the words of one wiser than the children of men, that this was suffered on account of the hardness of their hearts, but that in the beginning it was not so. Cain (the first unhappy example upon record of the fatal effects of unbridled envy and revenge) though the murderer of his brother, was not doomed to death by the Almighty, but condemned to wander a wretched vagabond on the earth; and heavy punishment was threatened to any who should kill him. (Gen. iv.) Nay, even though he seemed to desire death as a refuge from those reflections, which, after the commission of that fatal crime, imbittered the remainder of his days. Human justice would in this case have condemned the unhappy criminal to suffer death, while Divine Wisdom thought fit to reserve him for other purposes.

lawful murder—between punishable theft and legal plunder : but what can justify a Christian, or one who lays any claim to humanity, in depriving a man of his life or property against his will, in any case whatever, so as to dismiss him guiltless from the bar of his own conscience ? Before this tribunal, no sagacity of the most learned and eloquent advocate can prove, that killing is not murder—or that it is more justifiable for a man to land on the coast of Africa, or any other foreign shore, to destroy or plunder its inhabitants, than it would be for him to kill the first man he met, who should refuse to furnish him with the means of purchasing some bauble on which his mind was set. No commission from any earthly power could still the remonstrances of that ever-present reprove, who would be continually reminding him, that he had slain a man to his hurt, whose blood, like that of Abel, cried against him from the ground.

A sailor in an engagement having discharged one of the guns, was suddenly struck with the following thought, “ What if that ball has killed “ a man ! ” the thought kept such possession of his mind, that he was ever after unable again to do a similar action\*. And is it not indispensably necessary

\* See an account of Thomas Lurting (A. D. 1663) in Sewell's history of the *Quakers*.



necessary for every one to consider what may be the consequences of his entering into an engagement, in which murder may not only be probable, but certain to be committed. This hand, may the young soldier exclaim, when the shrill trumpet

Happy people! did they universally live up to the principles which they profess; those principles which formed that true philanthropist, whom hundreds followed sorrowing to his grave; where the representatives of potentates, the woe-worn slave, and men of every rank (differing in complexion, language, and opinion) forgot awhile the vain distinctions which separated them from each other; and as the children of one common parent, animated by one soul, stood in awful expressive silence, and dropt a tributary tear to the memory of *Anthony Benezet*.

The author of a small anonymous work, entitled "*La Predication*," which appeared at Paris in the year 1766, thus speaks of this remarkable people:

(See p. 88 of a translation of that work, entitled "*The Inefficacy of Preaching*." London, 1771. Printed for Wilkie and Robson.)

" Do you wish to see a virtuous people? Repair to an  
 " immense city, the rival of Paris; there you may find a  
 " remarkable tribe, mixt with the rest of the world by  
 " their occupations, but separated from them by their  
 " religion, and still more so by their manners. The  
 " Quakers, ridiculed by the gay world, are strangers to  
 " intemperance, brutality, fraud, injustice, and violence;  
 " seldom charged with falsehood, when cited to appear as  
 " witnesses in courts of judicature, the law so highly  
 " respects

trumpet calls to arms, is yet unstained with human blood ; this heart is as yet unfulled by the guilt of murder ; but when I return in the evening (if ever I do return) can I reasonably expect to enjoy this comfortable reflection ? No ; if I reflect at all, a consciousness

“ respects their probity, that it admits their affirmation in  
 “ lieu of an oath. In trade, which they are all engaged  
 “ in, the buyer never asks abatement, because he knows  
 “ the feller will not exact. The law to punish bankrupts  
 “ was not made against them, for if, by an inevitable mis-  
 “ fortune, a Quaker should fail, his brethren would set  
 “ him up again. They are never found in tumults, or  
 “ popular commotions ; and being excluded from all posts,  
 “ dignities, and honours, they know how to be happy in  
 “ humility, in a close application to their business, and in  
 “ the bosom of their families. They practise one virtue,  
 “ which will always render them obnoxious to princes ;  
 “ and that is, they will not fight. They say, there are lions  
 “ and tigers enough without them ; but, in obedience to  
 “ the laws, they furnish money to feed the lions and tigers.  
 “ This flock of sheep, this band of honest people, is only  
 “ a remnant, as is well known, of that large colony which  
 “ makes Pennsylvania flourish. That just and pacific con-  
 “ queror, William Penn, forsook the pleasures, the titles,  
 “ and the elegances of London, and went to establish the  
 “ reign of virtue among the savages of America : without  
 “ arms, deceit, or violence, he purchased of them his  
 “ empire, and gave to the metropolis of it the noble name  
 “ of Philadelphia, because it was founded on brotherly-  
 “ love.”

Although

ness of injustice, violence, and slaughter may weigh me down to the earth ; and then even sleep, that image of death, may not afford me respite. My busy spirit, unrepressed by my tired limbs, may in horrid visions be acting over again the fatal deeds of the irrevocable day.

Self-preservation is allowed to be the first law of nature ; but this principle, which is often improperly urged as an argument in favour of a man's destroying another's life to save his own, is one of the strongest arguments to support the cause I am pleading. The brutes, taught by instinct (as it is called) will give up all to prolong their existence ; and some of them, when taken in a snare, will, with a courage more than human, gnaw off a limb to save their en-

Although this description may perhaps be regarded as a mere panegyric in respect of too many of those who wear the external garb of Quakerism, yet it is but the genuine effects of those principles held by the first founders of this sect, and which are still professed by and exemplified in the actions of a noble few, who tread in the steps of their humble and pious predecessors.

Among the chaff of *every* sect may be observed, by those who can look beyond the outward appearance, a few grains of good seed, bringing forth the gracious fruits of righteousness and peace. May the hour soon arrive in which their several prejudices against each other may be laid aside, and they may all be united in one faith.

dangered lives. They thus act up to the perfection of *their* nature ; and had man, like them, no higher privilege than mortal existence, he would be acting right in following their example. But man has something more than mortal life to preserve, something that may more properly be considered *himself*—a soul to guard from every taint of guilt and disobedience to his Creator's will : to preserve *this* therefore, he should give up all, even the natural life itself, rather than suffer it to contract a pollution which might accompany him beyond the grave, and incapacitate him for future happiness.

The man, who to save his own life slays another, may prolong it only to be destroyed by a fever, or some other disorder ; which, for aught he knows, may carry him off in the course of a few hours ; or his existence here may be only lengthened to pine away under the mournful reflection, that a fellow-creature has sunk lifeless to the ground beneath his murdering arm.

The man, who, after attempting every possible means of escape, suffers himself to be deprived of existence in this world, because he dare not lift up his hand against the life of a fellow-creature, may be regarded as weak and pusillanimous. But what then ?—Will the censure



sure of a few frail mistaken mortals disturb his quiet remains in the silent tomb ; or divest his innocent spirit of the peaceful reflection, that he died without having added to his other offences the guilt of murder ? It is true, he may have left behind him those who stood in need of his protection and support : but he has left them still within the reach of the boundless and unwearied benevolence of Him, who is not likely to withhold his all-sufficient care from those connections which have been given up for his sake. If such a man be in error, his error is on the side of mercy : it is not *his* alone ; he has an example for it in the conduct of the Primitive Christians—of the first great preachers of Christianity, the Apostles ; and it is founded on the precepts and practice of Jesus Christ himself.

The chief aim of those who argue in behalf of defensive war is directed at the passions, which are but too apt to receive sudden impressions without the assent of the understanding, and to hurry men into actions, which in their more reflecting moments they cannot but disapprove. And to such straits are they driven for arguments on this head, that they generally put cases which very seldom, if ever, occur : “ Suppose,” will they say, “ that not only a man’s own life be in danger, but the life also of his wife and children,”

“dren, can religion, can Christianity, forbid  
 “him to stand forth in their defence; and, if  
 “necessity requires it, to slay the assailant?”

Nature would, no doubt, feel on such an occasion more than words can express. But let us remember, that there may be a still greater trial of our dependence upon our Maker—were we commanded, as faithful Abraham was, to offer up an only child! His conduct may well serve as a comment upon those passages, in which our blessed Saviour thus addresses his disciples: *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.—He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* (Matt. x. 37, 39. See also Mark x. 35. Luke xiv. 26.) This also may be an example for our imitation in the trying hour of afflicting dispensations, should such be allotted us.

There are certainly duties which we owe to ourselves, our relations, friends, country, and all mankind—duties, which justice, humanity, and religion require us to fulfil; unless they come in competition with that higher and more important duty of obedience, which we owe to the Supreme and Benevolent Parent of all. When these several duties clash with each other  
 (which

(which they never do but through too great an attention to our worldly interest) it is easy to see which of the two ought to give way.

The duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, and which arise from our situations in this state, and tie us to each other in the various connections of kindred, friendship, and love, are no otherwise to be rightly maintained than by an unreserved obedience to the dictates of Divine Wisdom; which obedience, as it assimilates us to the Divine Nature, is the only ground and way to present and future happiness.

These, I trust, are truly Christian principles; and upon such principles alone can universal peace ever be established: the promulgation of them can never prove inimical to any government; for the man who dares not lift up his hand against a fellow-creature, in defence of his own property, life, and dearest connections, will hardly be seduced to act with violence upon any less motives; and he, whose every action is framed according to the will of God, will never willingly or knowingly offend, much less injure, those whom his Maker has commanded and taught him to love even as himself.

*POSTSCRIPT.*

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## POSTSCRIPT.

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SHOULD these pages fall into the hands of any of those brave, but mistaken men, who are engaged in what is termed the service of their country, they are requested to favour them with a serious and candid perusal—widely as they must differ from the author, it has been his endeavour to avoid giving them or others the slightest cause of offence. It is far, very far, from his intention to condemn them, even in thought. He is firmly persuaded that many of them act sincerely, though, perhaps *ignorantly in unbelief*. To their own master must every one stand or fall. Happy would he esteem himself to become the instrument of awaking in their hearts those latent suggestions, which, if attended to, would lead them to lay aside the weapons of carnal warfare, and enlist under the banners of the captain of their salvation: there would they find a more ample field for the exertion of their fortitude and courage; and, by ceasing from contentions for a perishable chaplet and an uncertain reward from men, become candi-

dates



dates for an unfading immortal crown, the sure recompense of the just, from the great giver of every good and perfect gift.

When we consider the character, abilities, learning, and influence of many worthy men, who, blinded by the prejudices of education, plead in behalf of defensive war, there is but little cause to wonder at the less informed and less thoughtful part of mankind falling into this fatal error.

A sufficiency to furnish the contents of a volume, and that no inconsiderable one, condemning the practice of war in general, might be selected from the writings of eminent characters of the present day, especially of the Bishops, &c. of the establishment: and yet (strange and unaccountable as it is) at every ordination, held generally four times in each year, subscriptions are required from the candidates for holy orders, to articles which contain this truly antichristian tenet, as the doctrine of truth, "That it is lawful for Christians to wear weapons, and serve in the wars." What is this but suffering men blindly to assent to propositions as true, which are most evidently false, and spreading still more wide the fatal influence of a dangerous and destructive error—making an  
acknowledgment

acknowledgment of the very mark of Antichrist part of the qualification of a minister of the Prince of Peace, and, as it were, leading men into the sacred recesses of the sanctuary with a in their right hand? May those whom this remark concerns, give it the consideration which it so well deserves!

Others again who dissent from the established church, on matters of doubtful disputation, speculative opinions, forms, and ceremonies, yet retain and plead for this most objectionable error; many of almost every party, while separating from, and disputing with each other, for the systems and theories of conceited, selfish, proud, or interested men, are acting in direct contradiction to the real principles and most essential doctrines of Christianity.

15 JY 64

*FINIS.*

